

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of informing dynamically a user of a large scale network of other network users, the method comprising:

determining dynamically an online context of the user;

identifying other users presently within the online context of the user;

5 storing trait information related essentially only to the user or to the other users in a users store related to the online context; and

informing the user dynamically of the other users based on the stored trait information.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein determining an online context of the user comprises
10 determining an Internet domain currently accessed by the user.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein determining an online context of the user comprises determining a newsgroup currently accessed by the user.

15 4. The method of claim 1 wherein determining an online context of the user comprises determining a message board currently accessed by the user.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein determining an online context of the user comprises determining a URL currently accessed by the user.
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6. The method of claim 1 wherein determining an online context of the user comprises determining an online context on which the user presently is focused.

25 7. The method of claim 1 wherein identifying other users presently within the online context of the user comprises dynamically identifying users who enter the online context and users who leave the online context.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the trait information comprises information related an age of the user or of an other user.

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9. The method of claim 1 wherein the trait information comprises information related to a demographic identifier of the user or of an other user.

5 10. The method of claim 1 wherein the trait information comprises information related to an expertise rating of the user or of an other user.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the trait information comprises information related to an interest of the user or of an other user.

10 12. The method of claim 1 wherein the trait information comprises information related to a participation status of the user or of an other user.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the information related to the participation status comprises a visibility preference of the user or of the other user.

15 14. The method of claim 12 wherein the information related to the participation status comprises information defining the participation status of the user or of the other user based on multiple online contexts.

20 15. The method of claim 1 wherein the trait information comprises trait information of an individual selected as an associate by the user or by an other user.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein the trait information comprises information related to an online status of the user or of an other user.

25 17. The method of claim 16 wherein the online status comprises a status of active, idle, away, and/or mobile.

30 18. The method of claim 1 further comprising storing other information related essentially only to the user or to the other users in the users store related to the online

context; and informing the user dynamically of the other users based on the stored other information.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein the other information comprises information
5 indicative of an identification of the user or of an other user.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein the information indicative of an identification
comprises an online identifier associated with the user or with the other user.

10 21. The method of claim 18 wherein the other information comprises contact information
of the user or of an other user.

22. The method of claim 18 wherein the other information comprises information based
on an activity level associated with the online context.

15 23. The method of claim 22 wherein the users store is migrated based on the activity
level.

24. The method of claim 22 wherein the users store is divided based on the activity level.

20 25. The method of claim 22 wherein the users store is combined with a related users store
based on the activity level.

26. The method of claim 1 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users
25 comprises informing the user of the other users based on a demographic identifier of the
other users.

27. The method of claim 1 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users
comprises informing the user of the other users based on a similar age of the user and of the
30 other users.

28. The method of claim 1 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users comprises informing the user of a total number of the other users.

5 29. The method of claim 1 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users comprises informing the user of an identity of at least one of the other users.

30. The method of claim 1 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users comprises informing the user of a trait of at least one of the other users.

10 31. The method of claim 30 wherein the trait comprises an interest of at least one of the other users.

32. The method of claim 30 wherein the trait comprises an interest of an individual selected as an associate by the other user.

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33. The method of claim 30 wherein the trait comprises an expertise of at least one of the other users.

20 34. The method of claim 1 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users comprises displaying to the user information indicative of an other user based on the stored trait information.

35. The method of claim 34 wherein a trait of the other user is indicated graphically.

25 36. The method of claim 35 wherein the trait is an interest or an expertise of the other user.

37. The method of claim 34 wherein an identity of the other user is indicated graphically.

30 38. The method of claim 1 further comprising enabling the user to communicate with at least one of the other users of which the user is informed.

39. The method of claim 38 wherein enabling the user to communicate with at least one of the other users of which the user is informed comprises enabling the user to send an instant message to the at least one of the other users.

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40. The method of claim 38 wherein enabling the user to communicate with at least one of the other users of which the user is informed comprises enabling the user to send an email to the at least one of the other users.

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41. The method of claim 38 wherein enabling the user to communicate with at least one of the other users of which the user is informed comprises enabling the user to contact directly the at least one of the other users using a voice communication.

42. The method of claim 40 wherein the voice communication employs a mobile device.

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43. The method of claim 38 wherein enabling the user to communicate with at least one of the other users of which the user is informed comprises enabling the user to store contact information of the at least one of the other users to a contact list of the user.

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44. The method of claim 43 wherein the contact list of the user comprises a buddy list.

45. The method of claim 1 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users comprises informing the user of the other users sorted according to trait information of the user.

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46. The method of claim 8 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users comprises informing the user of other users having an age similar to an age of the user.

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47. The method of claim 9 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users comprises informing the user of other users having a similar demographic identifier.

48. The method of claim 45 wherein the trait information comprises preference information of the user.

5 49. The method of claim 1 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users comprises informing the user only of other users associated with trait information of the user.

50. The method of claim 49 wherein the trait information comprises information indicative of a location related to the user.

10 51. The method of claim 1 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users comprises providing updated information based on a user designated interval.

52. The method of claim 1 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users comprises providing updated information based on a system designated interval.

15 53. The method of claim 1 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users comprises providing updated information about every 15 seconds.

20 54. The method of claim 1 wherein informing the user dynamically of the other users comprises providing updated information about every 60 seconds.

55. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
detecting dynamically a changed online context of the user;
identifying changed context users presently within the changed online context of the user;
25 storing second trait information related essentially only to the changed context users in a changed users store; and
informing the user dynamically of the changed context users based on the stored second trait information.

30 56. A system of informing dynamically a user of a large scale network of other network users, the system comprising:

a context determination service configured to determine dynamically an online context of the user;

an identification service configured to identify other users presently within the online context of the user;

5 an information storage service configured to store trait information related essentially only to the user or to the other users in a users store related to the online context; and

an informing service configured to inform the user dynamically of the other users based on the stored trait information.

10 57. A computer program stored on a computer readable medium or a propagated signal for informing dynamically a user of a large scale network of other network users, the computer program comprising:

a context determination code segment that causes a computer to determine dynamically an online context of the user;

15 an identification code segment that causes the computer to identify other users presently within the online context of the user;

an information storage code segment that causes the computer to store trait information related essentially only to the user or to the other users in a users store related to the online context; and

20 an informing code segment that causes the computer to inform the user dynamically of the other users based on the stored trait information.